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For more information please visit: International Scientific Cooperation

In-depth review of the implementation of the programme of work on agricultural biodiversity

In 2000, the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) adopted a world-wide programme of work on the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity. Its implementation was reviewed during the 13th meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, from February 18th to 22nd, 2008. The Canadian delegation was lead by Environment Canada; AAFC was represented by Dr. Brad Fraleigh, Director, Intergovernmental Relations (ISCB).

SBSTTA agreed that the programme of work on agricultural biodiversity, including its three international initiatives (pollinators, soil biodiversity, and food and nutrition), provides a relevant framework to achieve the objectives of the CBD. It noted the significant contribution of agriculture to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through innovation, and reducing hunger and poverty. However, delegations were not able to come to agreement on the contentious issue of the impact of the production of biofuels.

Other agenda items addressed by SBSTTA included invasive alien species, the program of work on forest biodiversity, and options for mutually supportive actions addressing climate change.

Information, documents and the SBSTTA meeting report can be found at Convention on Biological Diversity. Coverage by the Earth Negotiations Bulletin is available at Linkages. SBSTTA's recommendations will be submitted for consideration by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD at its 9th meeting, to be held in May 2008.

Photo: Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio, Italian Minister for the Environment, Land and Sea, addresses the SBSTTA (photo credit: Earth Negotiations Bulletin)

Photo: Three Canadian delegates (l. to r.): Brad Fraleigh, Ole Hendrickson, Richard Laing (photo credit: Earth Negotiations Bulletin)

Contact: Dr. Brad Fraleigh

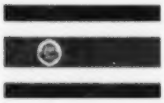
International Day for Biological Diversity - May 22nd, 2008

The theme of the International Day for Biological Diversity this year is "Biodiversity and Agriculture".

The thirteenth meeting of the Biodiversity Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) welcomed preparations for the 2008 International Day. It emphasized the importance of the Day for enhancing awareness of the value of agricultural biodiversity, its current status and rate of loss, the need to support conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and to implement actions that will halt its loss. Agricultural biodiversity contributes to food security, human nutrition, poverty eradication and improved rural livelihoods. The SBSTTA noted the importance of agricultural biodiversity towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Convention on Biological Diversity provides additional information on this year's theme, as well as attractive posters and logos to download.

Contact: Dr. Brad Fraleigh



Cooperation in microbial biodiversity with Costa Rica

In February 2008, an Academic Exchange Arrangement (AEA) was signed with the University of Costa Rica in San José. The University is the leading agricultural institution in the country and within the sub-region. AAFC scientists have developed technologies that could be modified for use in Costa Rica, which is looking to strengthen existing farming systems, sustain food security effortsand improve family income. Collaborative research on biodiversity has potential for novel discovery as Costa Rica is a unique centre for plant, bacterial and fungal biodiversity, being home to rare and distinct species. Such collaboration will enhance the understanding of global biodiversity. Collaboration started in September 2006 when Dr. James Tambong from ECORC participated as a guest expert in a workshop on the Use of oligonucleotides for detection and identification of plant pathogens.

Under the AEA, Dr. Tambong will host Ms Ivania Vartin, an MSc student, for 6 weeks in 2008.

Contact: Dr. Johanne Boisvert

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Mid-term review of capacity building for plant genetic resources in Africa

At the request of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Dr. Brad Fraleigh, Director, Intergovernmental Relations (ISCB), held discussions in Italy, Kenya and Uganda from February 25th to 29th, to review the progress made in a CIDA-funded project to build national capacity for plant genetic resources activities in eight sub-Saharan African countries.

The project supports implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture through the establishment of National Information Sharing Mechanisms and the preparation of national strategic assessments on the status of plant genetic resources in the following countries: Angola, Cameroon, Congo (Brazzaville), Guinea (Conakry), Malawi, Niger, Uganda and Zambia.

Work is progressing well, guided by the African regional office of Bioversity International, in Nairobi, Kenya. Dr. Fraleigh also met with project collaborators at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and national stakeholders in Uganda.

When the project is completed in the fall of 2008, the results should be posted on The Information Sharing Mechanism on GPA Implementation along with information provided by many other countries.

Photo: Shopping for African leafy vegetables
(photo credit: S. Mann / IPGRI)

Photo: Agroforestry genebank in Nairobi, Kenya
(photo credit: W. van Opzeeland / ICRAF)

Contact: Dr. Brad Fraleigh

AAFC: A management model for the Congo Republic (Congo-Brazzaville)

On 5 March 2008, Mr. Marcel Mathez Ngako, Director of Administrative and Financial Affairs with the *Ministère de la recherche scientifique et de l'innovation technique* [Department of Scientific Research and Technical Innovation] visited the International Scientific Cooperation Bureau (ISCB). The purpose of this study mission was to become more familiar with how an Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's research centres operate. Mr. Ngako expressed his gratitude to Dr. Denis Petitclerc, Ms. Louise Clermont, Dr. Henri Goulet, Ms. Stéphanie Parisien, Dr. Brad Fraleigh and Mr. Shan He for their warm welcome and cooperation. "This visit has been very valuable, not only for me, but also for my country, as it has given me insight into the overall management of a research centre and how finances should be managed."

Photo: Dr. Brad Fraleigh and Mr. Marcel Ngako discuss the recent report funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) regarding the status of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in the Congo.

Contact: Dr. Johanne Boisvert

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Cooperation with Egypt in Food Processing and Packaging

Dr. Khaled Nagy, a research scientist at the Food Technology Research Institute (FTRI), Agricultural Research Centre in Egypt and Dr. Charles Forney, a research scientist at the Atlantic Food and Horticulture Research Centre, AAFC, visited the St-Hyacinthe Food Research and Development Centre and the Guelph Food Research Centre from January 28 to February 1, 2008. During their visit, they were warmly welcomed by the research managers and several scientists at both centres. In Guelph, Dr. Nagy also gave a presentation on research and training activities as well as the analytical and processing facilities at the Egyptian research institute. The presentation was followed by a roundtable discussion. Arrangements were made to visit the Vincor Canada Company that produces wine in St-Hyacinthe and the Canadian Research Institute for Food Safety (CRIFS). Dr. Mansel Griffiths, the Director of CRIFS, highlighted all the ongoing activities at the institute.

At present, Dr. Nagy is a visiting scientist at the Atlantic Food and Horticulture Research Centre, conducting a collaborative study with Dr. Forney on the development of edible coating packaging materials for fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. Dr. Nagy's tour was organized by ISCB following his visit to the FTRI centre in March 2007 in order to assess the potential area and opportunities for further cooperation between FTRI and AAFC researchers. Dr. Khaled Nagy can be reached at 902-679-5570.

Thanks are due to Christian Toupin, Louise Deschenes, Gilles Doyon, Vincor Canada, Mohit Baxi, Sayed Abdelaal, Magdalena Kostrzynska, John Shi, Qiang Liu, Mansel Griffiths and Ann Blake, who kindly accepted to meet with Dr. Nagy.

Contact: Dr. Jacques Millette

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